

Under the Rain

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Summary: A girl named Talim and a wolf named Link. These two lost souls are brought together under fateful circumstances. Fluffy one-shot.

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A/N: Here is a story request for TurbokatDragon239. Hope you and everyone reading this enjoys the story!

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><p>Under the Rain

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><p>Dreary gray clouds covered the afternoon sky as far as the eye could see, stretching from the mountain cliffs, whose craggy peaks vanished above the thick mist, to the horizon beyond the green sea of trees. A hard, unforgiving rain was falling, drenching the land and forcing the inhabitants of the forest to seek shelter.<p>

One lone wolf was unfortunately caught in the downpour. With greenish-gray fur, unique white markings on its forehead, and ears pierced with blue hoop earrings, it was obviously no ordinary wolf of the wild.

Knowing the rain wasn't going to let up or stop anytime soon, the beast trudged through muddy puddles and clambered over slippery roots and rocks in search of a place to hide from the miserable weather. Most of the trees were young and thin, their branches neither wide nor strong to shield the earth from the heavenly tears. Soaked to the bone, the wolf moved swiftly and carefully through the woods, constantly dragging the broken iron chain that was attached to the shackle around his front left foot. The soft clinking of iron was barely audible over the rain pattering against the leaves. His paws

of white were stained dark from the mud and his chain was beginning to collect debris, but he didn't mind any of it.

The wolf eventually stumbled upon a small clearing overgrown with low-growing berry shrubs and short flowering plants. Off to the side was a large, rotting log of an ancient tree that had fallen against an outcrop of jagged, slanted, dark gray rocks long ago. Healthy green moss and pale mushrooms covered parts of the dead wood. With the wide, heavy log propped up by the rocks, it appeared to provide some form of shelter. Feeling hopeful, the beast cautiously approached the bare spot under the log, his nose sniffing for any danger. He picked up the sweet, musky smell of rot over the rich scent of wet forest and nothing else. There were no signs of any other animals around. In fact, he had not seen nor heard any birds or animals of the forest since he mistakenly arrived. It was oddly quiet and eerie, making the wolf's fur stand on end.

The beast stopped a few steps before reaching the shade beneath the log when he saw the area was flooded with muddy water. He grunted in disappointment, feeling as if he was cursed with bad luck ever since the day had started.

The wolf continued on, not yet giving up on escaping the cold rain. He padded rounded the rocks and just when he was about to venture once again into the trees, he spotted an opening in the outcrop on the other side. It was a tiny cave with the entrance just big enough for the wolf to walk in without needing to crawl.

Thinking it might be a fox den, the wolf slowly approached the hole, his nose sniffing, eagerly hoping it was abandoned. The moment he poked his head in the hole he picked up a new, fresh scent that did not belong to a fox or any other wild creature.

He froze mid-step when he saw something move in the deepest corner of the little cave. Sharpened steel glinted in the dim light; a pair of short blades had been drawn, held taut in the hands of a human girl with dark hair and tanned skin. She could only kneel in the small space, but that didn't stop her from poising into a defensive stance, ready to defend herself from what she probably assumed was a dangerous wild wolf.

The wolf's blue eyes met her dark ones, both pairs equally surprised. They locked stares for one long moment, their breaths held and their bodies tense, neither moving in fear of provoking the other into attacking.

Who is she? The beast wondered, more curious than wary as he studied the girl. She was young, appearing as old as fifteen at most, but despite her age, she had the appearance of a well-traveled warrior. Around her shoulders was a hooded cloak that smelled of damp leather, its bottom end torn and muddy, and lying by her side was a small travelling sack made of cloth.

Why was she alone out here, deep in the forest? Was she lost just like him? Or had she been making her way through only to suddenly get caught in the rain?

Unable to speak in the human tongue, the wolf could only guess and not ask. He sensed no ill intentions from the girl, in fact, he could clearly see she was hesitant to use her blades against him. Her lips

were a tight line and her eyes were quivering. She was afraid.

The wolf had no desire to cause any trouble for her. Without breaking eye contact, he politely bowed his head and slowly backed away, silently telling her that he was leaving. She had found the cave first so it was hers.

"Wait."

The beast's ears twitched in surprise at the sound of the girl's sweet, young voice. He paused in his retreat and tilted his head slightly, blinking at her in confusion.

Her cautious expression morphed into a friendly one the moment she realized he was no threat. "It's cold in the rain. It's okay. You can stay here if you would like. I will not hurt you."

To prove her words true, she spun her weapons and slid them back into their respective sheaths by her hips. Her weapons were not ordinary daggers as the wolf had first thought, but twin, short blades with perpendicular hilts that allowed the wielder to hold them parallel to her forearms. They were strange weapons the wolf had never seen before, but the girl appeared well-trained with them by the way she casually handled them.

With her hand, she motioned for the wolf to come in and sit beside her as if he was a tamed dog.

The beast snorted in annoyance but didn't refuse her offer. He stepped out of the rain and into the small cave that was just big enough for the two of them to lie down. Water dripped off his fur. Out of instinct, he shook the water off his entire body from head to tail, making the girl squeak in surprise from the spray. He quickly gave her an apologetic look as she wiped the droplets off her face with the back of her hand. She didn't seem too angry about it, much to his relief.

The wolf sat right by the opening, leaving a small gap between them out of respect, and gazed out into the rain, watching droplets drip down from their only window. There was a sigh coming from his new companion as she shifted in her position. He turned his head slightly to glance at her from the side and noticed her watching him, seemingly interested and curious about him as much as he was of her. There were questions obviously rolling around in her head, but none formed on her lips.

For a long while, neither occupant moved nor made a sound, each minding their own business. They sat in their respective spots, sharing a stiff, awkward silence. There was nothing to do but to listen to the rain.

Time seemingly passed by agonizingly slow. The constant, heavy patterning over their rocky roof ceased to slow as the day drew on. The sky was darkening and the air grew chillier with each passing moment.

The silence was suddenly broken when the girl sneezed, making the wolf nearly jump out of his skin.

The beast sharply turned his head and found her staring back with a

bashful look. "Sorry!" she apologized with a meek smile and small bow of her head. She sniffled, wiped her runny nose with the back of her hand, and pulled her cloak tighter around her shivering body.

The wolf furrowed his brow in sympathy. The girl was cold and, with night fast approaching, her situation was not going to improve. He wished he could start a fire for her, but he lacked the important function of human hands.

However, even if he was back in his normal body, the cave was too small for a fire and there was no dry fuel to use.

The beast pondered over one other idea that may help her. His fur was now mostly dry, perhaps he could stay close to her and keep her warm with his body heat. Would she allow him to draw so near? Since the girl was willing to share such a tiny enclosure with him, she may trust him enough to know that he would never bare his fangs at her.

He put her trust to the test and stood up, watching her reaction carefully. She flinched from his sudden movement, her eyes wide with caution and her hands moving beneath her cloak, likely grasping the hilts of her blades. He lowered his head to show he was not going to attack as he took a small step towards her, his chain lightly scraping against stone. She watched him intently, but otherwise did nothing more. A few more steps and the wolf instantly closed the gap between them. He patiently stood before her, his eyes never leaving hers to give her a moment to figure out what he was trying to do.

A smile graced her lips, one that seemed to brighten the dark, little cave.

"Do you want to keep me company, kind wolf?" she asked, sounding quite awed.

He nodded, bringing a wider, rather childish smile on her face. She reached out a hand only to stop a mere inch from touching his forehead. She met his gaze as if to silently ask for permission to pet him.

The wolf grunted and swallowed his dignity and pride. He wanted to pull away out of instinct â€“ he was not just an animal and did not want to be treated like one â€“ however, he wanted the girl to trust him. He snorted, flattened his ears, and tentatively pressed his head against her hand to get better acquainted with her.

She quietly giggled and combed her fingers through the wolf's thick mane. She shifted over and opened her cloak, inviting the beast to sit right beside her. Beneath the damp leather, she wore clothes that were foreign to the wolf's eyes with crimson silk ribbons and an elegant butterfly design upon her sleeveless blouse. The look reminded him of the elegant street-dancers he had seen from time to time around the main plaza of Hyrule Castle Town. She wore a pleasant perfume, reminiscent of a garden full of honeysuckle.

"My name is Talim," she said the moment the wolf was settled right beside her.

And I am Link, the wolf wished to return the courtesy.

Talim began to stroke Link's back as she took comfort in his presence. Being petted was a rather odd, but not uncomfortable sensation. He had thought he would loathe it, but when someone as gentle as Talim was doing it, it was rather calming.

"Do you wonder why I'm here?" she questioned, noticing the curiosity in his eyes. When he nodded vigorously, she continued, "I am on a quest. A very important quest. There is a great evil terrorizing the world and I have been searching for it in order to destroy it. I had travelled the seas, across the lands, over mountains and through valleys. Along the way, I encountered others who desired the same thing. They were my companions at first, but over time, they became my dearest friends. Together, we journeyed to many different countries and ended up in this forest while following a lead." As she spoke, she gazed ahead at the cave opening, her eyes visibly bold and burning with determination in the fading light.

Link was intrigued, sensing no lies in her words. What was this 'great evil' she spoke of that made her leave her home? Could it possibly be related to the Twilight Realm?_

Interested to know more, he nudged her shoulder with his nose in hope she would speak more of her quest. He received a little scratch under his chin and a small smile that unfortunately vanished as quickly as it came.

She dropped her attention to the moist ground before her feet, her stroking hand slowing to a stop upon the middle of the beast's back. A heavy frown marred her young face. "We thought we were getting close to the whereabouts of the great evil. However, it was a trap. This morning, we were ambushed," she murmured, her slender fingers curling into a tight, shaking fist. She slowly shook her head and closed her eyes at the vivid memory. "Servants of the great evil surrounded us, men whose hearts and bodies were corrupted by darknessâ€!"

Link's ears pricked at 'darkness', feeling a sense of dread wash over him.

"They suddenly appeared without warning, showing up between the trees as if summoned by magic. We were outnumbered and forced to fight like cornered prey. Powerful as they were, we stood strong and fearless against them, never giving up. We fought with our all and took them down one by one. We thought we would prevail; victory was nigh upon us. But then, he appeared before usâ€!"

There was a tremor in her voice and her eyes snapped open, fear present in her downcast stare.

The wolf leaned against her and rested the side of his head on her shoulder. Since he had no hands, he could not give her a supporting hand. The simple gesture prompted her to press her body closer and drape her stroking arm around his back. It was all she needed to continue her gripping tale.

"The wielder of the great evil, the legendary Azure Knight, Nightmareâ€! A terrible demon who sought after nothing but the souls of the living through death and destruction. I thought I was prepared to face such an unholy foe... but Nightmare was far beyond what I had imagined.

"I have heard stories from my friends, many of them terrifying and true. But there were heroic tales as well. Nightmare had been defeated before, both him and the great evil sealed away in another realm. However, even when knowing he was not invincible, even with my brave friends by my side, I still trembled in fear the instant I saw him. True to his name, he emerged from the woods like a demonic shadow, bringing with him malice and hate. Never had I ever felt so much evil concentrated in a single being. He cursed everything he touched, the forest withered in his wake and the air turned eerily cold and heavy."

She took a deep breath and shuddered, clenching her hands and clutching onto Link's fur out of terror. The wolf let out a small whine and lightly nudged the side of his snout against her cheek. Her tale was becoming something more than he had expected. Nightmare did not sound like a typical Twilight monster under Zant's command and it worried Link greatly.

Corrupted men summoned as if by magic, a demon who wielded a great evil could all of it truly be due to the forces of the Twilight Realm?

Link had a strong gut feeling it was not the case. He had saved all of the Light Spirits of Hyrule, none of the Twili should be able to invade the Light Realm. Unless he was no longer in the land of Hyrule but in another country! Now that he thought about it, this forest was neither Faron Woods nor the Sacred Grove; there were no mountains that close to either.

A new worry sprung to the wolf's mind: where did his partner send him with her power of teleportation?

Talim felt the wolf's body stiffen and resumed her petting, running her hand between his ears and down to the middle of his back, slowly and repeatedly. Each stroke magically soothed the beast's trouble away and it seemed to do the same for her.

"Nightmare did not come alone," she continued, her voice a quiet murmur under the pounding rain. "He brought with him his strongest followers, each one possessing unimaginable strength and powers. Weary from battling the ambushers, we were quickly overwhelmed. We had to split up and flee in order to survive."

"I ran with the wind blowing at my back, guiding me through the forest, away from my pursuers. One of them was a young woman with tattered clothes and a deadly blade in the shape of a large ring. I could see it in her eyes; her mind was twisted! her soul corrupted! 'Don't run!' she taunted me. 'Let me cut out your cute little face and add it to my collection!' Bless the wind and the sky above, I was able to lose them when it began to rain and the ground turned slick. I eventually found shelter within these rocks and have been hiding ever since."

Talim sighed and ran her other hand through her short bangs. "And that is why I am here," she concluded, giving Link a small, sad smile and one last pat on the head. "Once the rain stops, I will search for my friends. I can only pray they are all still alive and safe!"

The wolf quietly snorted and bowed his head to show her he would pray for them as well.

She seemed amused and formed a more pleasant smile. She brought her knees close to her body, crossed her arms on top, and rested the side of her head on her arms. Her eyes lingered on the wolf's shackled foot caked in drying mud.

"I see you have endured some hardships of your own, kind wolf. Did you escape from a terrible place? You must have come far; there are no towns or villages near these woods and never have I seen such markings on a beast. And these scars on your legs!" She reached out and stopped herself, her hand hovering over the wolf's front left leg. She frowned at him in concern. "You have been in many battles, haven't you?"

Link nodded, wishing he could physically smile without looking like a menacing beast. Would you even believe me if I could tell you my story? The places I have seen and the creatures I have slain, I could go on for days about my adventures. —

Where would he even begin if he could speak in the human tongue?

Do not be fooled by my appearance, young Talim. I am not truly a wolf but a man. I was once a simple rancher-boy back in Ordon Village, raising and herding goats. It was a quiet, peaceful life. But that had all changed one fateful day. I was literally dragged into my destiny, into a whole new world, into a whole new journey full of peril and wonder! —

You and I are quite similar in a way, young Talim. I too am on a quest to defeat a powerful evil; a usurper and tyrant of the Twilight Realm who began to invade the Light Realm. In order to stop his forces, I had to travel across Hyrule, from thick forests to snowy mountains, a volcanic mine to a blistering desert, beneath the lake and above the clouds! I had battled fiends large and small, fierce and unforgiving. And I did not do it all alone, but with a friend, the banished and cursed princess of the Twilight Realm in fact.

—
And where did the Her Little Highness disappear to? She was the reason why he was now here, lost in an unfamiliar forest that may not even be a part of Hyrule. She was supposed to teleport Link to Gerudo Desert as he had kindly requested, but something had obviously gone wrong midway through. She would never play such a mean trick on him, not when he had promised to help her. She had trusted him just as much as he trusted her.

Link could only pray it was somehow an accident on her part and not due to something terrible that may have happened to her during half-way through her warp spell.

Unable to hear the story going through Link's mind, Talim gave him a sympathetic pat on the head and a relieved smile. "Whatever terror you escaped from, I'm glad you're now safe. However, you shouldn't stay in this forest, not when Nightmare and his soldiers are still around. Best to run to the mountains and stay there until it's safe again... Understand? My friends and I! When we regroup, we will eliminate the evil haunting these woods."

The wolf sensed no fear or hesitation in her voice and it brought an admiring smile to his mind. She was devoted to her righteous quest, evident by the fire burning in her eyes.

You are young and very courageous, a true warrior in mind and spirit. _

If only Talim could hear what Link thought of herâ€!

"Are you hungry?" she asked, suddenly changing the subject and mood. She sat up and started to rummage in her bag. She took out a small, crumpled parcel wrapped in brown paper. "I still have some jerky I bought a month ago. Would you like some?" She held up a finger-sized piece right in front of the wolf's face.

The instant Link's nose picked up the savoury aroma of the dried meat, his mouth began to salivate. He didn't realize how hungry he was despite knowing he hadn't eaten all day. Unable to resist, he chomped and gnawed on the offered jerky. It was almost as tough as hide, but at least it tasted like actual food albeit a little too salty.

Such a small piece wasn't enough to satiate the beast's big appetite. He licked his teeth and hungrily eyed the rest of the meat in Talim's hand.

Without a word, Talim placed the parcel on the ground in front of Link's paws and motioned for him to eat. There wasn't much jerky left, only a scant few pieces that were smaller than the one he had eaten.

Link had to restrain himself from devouring it all because he didn't want to consume what could be her only rations.

"It's okay," Talim assured, sensing the wolf's guilt. She took out a larger parcel wrapped in white cloth. "I have plenty of rice cake so go ahead and finish the jerky."

The wolf bowed his head to thank her and together they enjoyed their small meals in the final moments of daylight. She had quenched his thirst by pouring some from her water-skin into her cupped hand, allowing him to quickly lap it up.

As night fell, it felt as if Link was slowly going blind. The weeping clouds refused to part, keeping the moonlight from shining through and resulting in a pitch black darkness to descend upon the silent forest. The rain had slowed to a mere drizzle by then, quietly pitter-pattering against their stone roof.

It was dark and cold in the little cave. Although Link had no problem with the near-freezing temperature, Talim was suffering with her clothes and cloak so thin. He didn't want her to freeze overnight. To help her stay warm, the wolf laid on his front and curled right next to her, which she took as an invitation to cuddle right against him for warmth.

Link didn't actually mind having her use him as a furry pillow; she was small and light, her head barely putting any pressure on his back that he could still normally breathe.

"Thank you, kind wolf," she whispered, giving Link a quick scratch behind his ear. "I want to believe it was fate that brought you here with me tonight. I feel safe with you around. Let's get some rest. Morning will soon come."

Exhausted and lulled by the gentle rain, it didn't take long for Talim to fall asleep.

Link dared not to sleep. Talim could still be in danger. Asleep, she was vulnerable and Link wanted to keep her safe. She had gifted him with food and water, he wanted to return the favour. Although he saw nothing but darkness, he kept watch on the cave entrance. His ears twitched at every little sound that was not the rain while his nose constantly sniffed for new scents. He was tense, every muscle coiled, ready to attack whatever trespassed into their cave.

While maintaining his guard, he mulled throughout the night. Minutes gradually turned into long hours. He pondered over what he should do in the morning. It was dangerous for Talim to wander the forest alone in search of her friends. She may be capable of defending herself, however if she were caught in another ambush, Link feared she would not escape alive a second time. And her friends were they as fortunate as her? Did they all manage to escape unscathed?

By daybreak, the rain had finally stopped. It was by then that Link had decided his next course of action. He would help Talim reunite with her companions before setting off on his own to search for his lost partner. Midna, wherever she was, would understand his desire to help those around him first. It was in his blood; he was born a hero, destined to save and protect the people and the land.

He turned his head to gaze upon the sleeping girl, seeing only her dark silhouette in the dim light of dawn. He made a silent vow: I will not abandon you, young Talim. Until you are safe among your fellow warriors, I will remain by your side. It is easy to get lost here, but my nose may be able to guide us. If it truly was fate that brought us together, then allow me to defend you from harm. Although I cannot wield my sword of evil's bane, my fangs are just as strong. The great evil, Nightmare, their soldiers I will slay them all as a beast if I have to. But let us pray we can avoid them _

The light of dawn was beckoning. It was time to begin their new journey together.

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><p>AN: Thanks for reading!

End
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